

REMARKS

In a Office Action having a mailing date of August 10, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 7-12, 14-17, 19, 21-36, 38-51 and 53-56 under 35 U.S.C 102 as being anticipated by George (US 5,507,847). George discloses an ultra low penetration air (ULPA) filter. The filter unit employs a filtration media, preferably an expanded polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) membrane sandwiched between one or more layers of an upstream and downstream support material. As disclosed in George, "the support material 22, 24 is provided to retain the filtration layer in proper orientation during use." (Col. 5 L. 15 - 17) Materials such as NAL-TEX brand scrim or other similar woven screens are disclosed as suitable in this application. George describes 2 layers of upstream support material 26, 28. The first layer is a scrim support material. The NAL-TEX polypropylene scrim described in George has strands extruded and joined at a 90° angle with 9 stands per inch (Col. 6, L. 35-40). This is not a depth filtration media. The second layer of upstream support material 28 is provided "to protect the expanded PTFE membrane from damage by the scrim material." Suitable materials include REEMAY 2250 material. Because the efficiency for such material for 0.3 to 0.5 μm particles is only 0.2, it would not improve the filtration efficiency of an ePTFE membrane. George does not discuss prefiltration, and does not provide a motivation to combine its teachings with that of Schultheiss et al. (US 2003/0000389 A1).

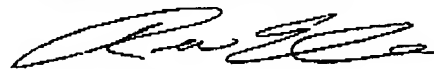
Schultheiss discloses the use of a non-woven fabric having an electrostatic charge ahead of melt-blown and paper filter layers to increase

suction efficiency stability and separation performance in a vacuum cleaner bag. Thus Schultheiss discloses a combination of two depth filtration media layers, the first layer have an electrostatic charge. Schultheiss does not disclose or suggest the combination of a membrane and a depth filtration media having an electrostatic charge. The ePTFE membrane in George is described as having very high filtration efficiencies of up to 99.99999% for 0.1 micron particles (Col. 4, LI. 50-55). There is no suggestion in Schultheiss that prefiltration using electrostatic media would improve separation performance or suction stability of such efficient media.

The forgoing argument applies with equal force to Claim 57, which stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over George, in view of Schultheiss and Frey (US 5,522,908) as well as to Claims 18, 20, 37 and 52 which are currently rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over George et al. in view of Frey. The latter claims have been amended to require that the depth filtration media have an electrostatic charge.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard W. Ellis, 46,683
W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.
551 Paper Mill Road
P.O. Box 9206
Newark, DE 19714-9206
(302) 738-4880

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